/37 cont./

83. Since, as it appears, the person who asked me this question is one of those who believes in the heavenly paradise which the Indians live in, invented and perpetuated by arm-chair writers, who "have written pretty books to prove to us that the savage is natural man and that we could wish nothing more than to become more like him" (J. de Maistre), I shall not answer him with the well-worn "there is nothing to what has been said," but I shall /38/ say to him, without going into detail, that there is considerable exaggeration in the reports and information given by writers, avid for publicity at any cost, in almost everything that has been said about the robustness, longevity, corpulence, and healthiness of the Indians.

Eyewitnesses will be in agreement with me, and taught by painful experience and vigilance will not to let themselves be surprised by so many dithyrambs, such as are heard about native races, particularly if they have already disappeared. From long distances, long falsehoods.

84. These Indians, like most peoples of the earth, live looking up to past times, in which (they say), men were strong, corpulent, and even giants. They add, these Indians, for this purpose, the fact that their ancestors were of such extraordinary height that they made inscriptions on the high rocks and plucked fruit with their hands, which today must be picked with the use of ladders and hooks. They further say that their race, principally due to premature matrimonies, is now degenerating in such a way that its descendants will have to use ladders and hooks, or forks, to pick ají, which are but one meter high. This universal tendency, common to individuals and to peoples, has already been observed and satirized by Horace in his famous sentence: "In my opinion, any past time was better," which is attributed to old people.

This is pure legend; and what is certain is that the Indians are, indeed, not of tall stature nor do they attain any singular longevity.

/40 cont./
which I copied a few days ago because of its great similarity to those used by our Indians, in all of the essential elements.

Charms

Charm for when there are many mosquitos. The palm bear /oso palmero/ and the nocturnal bird called masak-yűn, which literally means father of the mosquitos, are invoked. "I, I do make that of all the animals the mosquitos should not keep me awake. On this being said, it fanned itself with its immense tail. And it enchanted itself, saying: I am the progenitor of uasunsuk (uasunsuk piá); I am the progenitor of the kochirí (kochirí piá). "With this charm the uoro-uorí, or fan for fanning away mosquitos, is charmed! And this done the plague disappears and one can sleep in peace."

(Written in Pemón by the native Pablo Fierro de Kukenán.)

Charm for working or weaving manare /sieve/. Piaimá is invoked. Although he has a small child, he begins to weave manare; but disease or his evil influence does not reach the child, nor does it turn his neck, nor does it do any other evil to him. He said, chanting to himself: "I, I do weave the fiber of the manare; I, progenitor of pichiuai; I, progenitor of ipó. With this are charmed those who, being fathers of small children, weave objects of basketwork. And with this also are blown upon or charmed children before they begin to work in this."

(Copied in Pemón by the same person.)

Charm for sandals and for face painting. The thunder-lightening, uaranapí, in spite of being the father of a small child, took his kumí, painted his face with striae and went on a trip and the malicious beings did not recognize him, the case being that they were posted to cast the evil eye upon him; he scorned them. He said, making a charm: Here am I, I, progenitor of chichiu. This is the so-called taurón, or

563. Out of (motion from) — -wapai. Used as a postposition. e.g. tuna-wapai. "out from the water."

564. Like (similar to, in the manner of) — -pe. Used as a postposition. e.g. iwoto-pe, "like an animal."

565. To, on, plus — -pona. Used as a postposition. e.g. ena-to-iratoimar-pona taukin. "ten plus one," i.e. eleven.

566. Method, means of me — (it)etseru.

567. Peccary call, sound made by a kawai (No. 227) — wairi.

568. Names of Tribes — Kamara-koto. This spelling is more strictly correct but for convenience Kamarakoto is used throughout this paper.

569. Arekuna.

570. — Pabanaton. This is the Kamarakoto name of the Mayongones or Maquiritares.

The following names are given in the legend of Maicha[1] as those of racial progenitors and explained by the narrator as archaic names for tribes. Probably none are now applied to actual tribal groups:

571. Karopakoi[1] — "from Luepa" i.e., from the northern Gran Sabana or possibly the adjacent Cuyuni valley or British Guiana.

572. Karoxiai — from the Gran Sabana.

573. Nungakoi — from Brazil.

574. Mwerwan — from the Karoni.

575. Name of legendary hero — Maicha[1].

576. Name of legendary king buzzard — Atito.

Grammar

My stay with the Kamarakotos was not sufficiently long to acquire a fully grammatical acquaintance with the language and all that can be given here are a few notes and general summary of the type of grammatical structure. Koch-Grünberg has provided a relatively full grammar of Taurepán and Williams of Makuchi. These dialects are similar to Kamarakoto in grammar, as they are in vocabulary, but with numerous minor differences. The following notes demonstrate the similarity and show that it is not an identity, without attempting any exhaustive treatment.

The Noun.

Kamarakoto nouns are in a condition between pure agglutination and true inflection. There is no set system of declension but number and case are generally indicated by suffixes or postpositions which appear to be on the same

They use the rattle for
534 dancing, but a legend suggests its connection with magic, a connection which
535 Izikowitz believes to have been involved in the spread of this instrument. In
● 773 this legend a maraka appears as a magical instrument the sounding of which
224 causes peccaries, the favorite prey of hunters, to appear. In fact the use of the rattle in dancing is probably connected with this sort of hunting magic, although the connection is not now clearly recognized by the Indians.

534 3. The Kamarakotos make drums (Fig. 68) of various sizes but all are constructed in the same way and all are light and portable so that the player can carry one and dance at the same time. The kettledrum and the tubular (open bottom) drum are unknown, only the two-headed form being used. The body is made of a section of a tree trunk (a white, soft, unidentified wood) of appropriate diameter, with the center hollowed out. A single round hole is
[237] made in the side as an air vent. The drumheads are made of hide, deer, lapa, peccary, etc., — a specimen has deerskin on one end and peccary on the other and apparently any hide of proper size is used indiscriminately. The hair-side is out on the finished drum but the hair is removed from the exposed surface.
[284] The skin is lashed by spiral curagua windings to a liana hoop of proper size to fit snugly on the drum body onto which it is slipped. It is held in place and the drumhead stretched by placing a second hoop distal to it (nearer the end of the drum) on each end and these tightening hoops, which are not fastened to the drumhead or body, are drawn toward each other by a crisscross lashing of heavy cords. Where these cross, at the middle of the side of the drum, a circular lashing of the same cord is fastened and from this a carrying cord projects, which may be made into a loop by tying its end to one of the lashings. The drum is carried in one arm and played with a single stick held in the other hand.

114 The origin and distribution of drums in South America have given rise
171 to extensive discussion, most of which is adequately summarized by Izikowitz.
174 The pre-Columbian distribution cannot now be exactly reconstructed except
534 that it was certainly wide. The kettledrum is the oldest and from it an open-bottomed drum developed in Mexico and Central America. It was formerly supposed that two-headed drums were all post-Columbian but Izikowitz has shown that such drums are indigenous at least in Peru and adjacent regions. On the other hand Izikowitz agrees with most previous students in concluding that the drum was unknown in northeastern South America (Amazonia, the Guianas, Venezuela, and the West Indies, at least) until introduced by Europeans. Only a few students have ventured a contrary opinion, for example, Williams says of the Makuchi word sanbura, "This may perhaps be a native word as the drum must have existed before the advent of Europeans." Roth has pointed out apparently conclusive evidence that the first Europeans, including Columbus himself, found single-membrane drums in use in the West Indies, evidence apparently overlooked by Izikowitz. A few early travelers in the Guianas and in Amazonia also mention what seem to be one-membrane drums

Typical hunting magic with a
224 maraka and a song-spell appears in the Legend of Maichak on another page
[773] (the episode of the second magic implement, stolen by Maichak from an armadillo). It is reasonable to assume that this represents magic once really used by mortals, but it is merely inherited by the Kamarakotos as part of the story and is not used by them. They do employ two very curious but typically Carib
[824] magic means of increasing proficiency in hunting. One of these is to insert a cord of twisted moriche fibers into one nostril and to pull it out through the
[304] mouth. The other is to scarify the skin of the arms and then to rub in a crushed
[824] plant, called kumi, which is sometimes especially grown for this purpose. Our hunters ruefully admitted that none of the Kamarakoto hunting magic is really very effective.

General Religious Ideas.

773 Most of the myths, including the several that together make up the story of Maichak as given in this report, abound in unnatural and supernatural events and beings. To this extent, as well as to the extent that they embody explanations of natural phenomena and of creation, they include ideas usually related to religion. It would, however, be misleading to suppose that they form or assume the existence of any coherent or fixed body of religious doctrine. They are simply stories, fairy tales if one wishes, in which the non-natural is taken for granted.

778 There is firm belief in the existence of spirits, mostly inimical, of whom Piaima is typical and is the most important. Piaima and the kanaimaton are still very much in the Indians' minds. Various other spirits are believed to exist but are seldom thought of and few of the Indians can even name any of them.
77[1]
[178] Such simple theology as the tribe may have possessed seems largely to have broken down and to have been forgotten except as it has a practical bearing on
[782] their lives, which means except as it relates to illness and misfortune. Prayer,
[787] or any form of communication with the supernatural, seems to be unknown except as already suggested for the piaches.

In this rudimentary and probably degenerate system, misfortune is adequately explained by kanaima. Evil and sin do not appear to be considered supernatural or unnatural and there is no evident moral or ethical relationship of religion to their lives, which undoubtedly goes far to explain (or at least is correlated with) their carefree, happy, and, in a sense, sinless lives. They do not have any burden of original sin to bear. Felicity is considered a normal state for which no thanks are due to powers on high. I could not learn that they have any planting or harvest gods or ceremonies, which seems curious in an agricultural people.

775 No clear-cut statement of indigenous doctrine regarding the soul and life after death could be obtained, the usual statement being that "we don't know

868 Children generally follow much the same occupations as their elders of
857 the same sex, beginning by playing that they are doing so, as our children "play house," and ending by performing the actual work as they become capa-
524 ble of it. Their playthings, too, are almost invariably small replicas or imita-
868 tions of objects used by their elders. Thus the first toy of a small boy is commonly an improvised bow, with which he "plays Indian," as a white boy might (Fig. 79). Some of the boys show great ingenuity in making imitations of weapons, tools, etc.[181]

The Kamarakotos make cat's-cradles, but I did not attempt to collect
[121] these. I saw none not already recorded from the Makuchis or Akawais (see es-
114 pecially Roth, 1924, whose elaborate compilation of these string-figures includes all that I saw among the Kamarakotos).

Mythology

●773 Like all Indians, the Kamarakotos have an extensive body of myths and
[128] legends. It is probable, however, that these are already dying out to some extent, since few of the younger members of the tribe seemed to have much knowledge of them or to take much interest in them except as casual stories. Un-
[124] doubtedly, a great many are still accurately known, but our time permitted the textual record of only one.[182] This is a typical, representative example and serves excellently to illustrate the characteristics of Kamarakoto mythology and its probable sources and relationships.

539 Rigid accuracy and authenticity may be claimed for the text here given,
126 despite the linguistic and other difficulties. It was told to me by Antonio
128 Montesdeoca during four sessions in March, 1939. Antonio gave the story not
[115] only from his own memory but also from the collected versions of numerous other members of the tribe, several of whom were present at each session and who were carefully consulted on all doubtful points. The story as a whole was translated into Spanish by Antonio, with passages also given in Kamarakoto by him and by others present. I recorded it in English and then read it back, in Spanish, section by section, to Antonio who carefully corrected the slightest
[538] deviation from the meaning of the Kamarakoto text.[183] The Kamarakoto text itself is not verbally memorized and varies with the teller, but its sense is invariable and this procedure guarantees that this sense is fully retained in the present version.

The Story of Maichak.[184]

539 Maichak was an Indian who lived a long time ago in what we now call Kamarata. At that time, men lived for centuries and centuries. When Maichak

181-184 [see footnotes on p. 329, category 116 - Analyst]

273 574 177. Of course all individuals spend intervals sleeping, but some are awake and hilarious at all times.

533 539 178. This is a free and not a literal rendering. The language of these songs, despite the fact that they can include some improvisation, is not common speech but is "poetic," probably archaic, and is not entirely clear even to all the Indians. The translation given conveys the sense of the words as they understand them.

[195] 179. In prose language the equivalent would be some expression like autsimbe dai?, "I am satisfied, pleased."

535 171 180. The Makuchi song given by Roth refers to the white clay paint, which was evidently essential to the dance in its more primitive or more stereotyped form, but in all the Kamarakoto dances such pseudo-ritualistic compulsions have become voluntary and are often omitted — this is true even of the parichara-pon.

524 153 181. A boy at Uruyén made a remarkably good small model of an airplane, including workable wheels and a propeller that turned in the wind. I could not learn that he received any help or inspiration from more sophisticated sources and he maintained that the work was entirely his own idea and execution, but I find this almost incredible and cannot record it as a fact.

● 773 182. But as will be seen, this legend or myth is composite and consists of several quite distinct stories united by assigning the leading role to the same character.

773 115 126 128 183. It is interesting, as illustrative of his own comprehension and insistence on the value of complete accuracy, that Antonio himself demanded this procedure and refused to leave a passage until convinced of my thorough comprehension of it.

539 184. This is adopted as the best non-technical transcription of the name maicha?.

[415] 185. A small gourd vessel, wai in Kamarakoto.

[825] 186. The kind called atsi:gamo, the Venezuelan "cachicamo."

[834] 187. maraka, a gourd rattle with a wooden handle.